

Subprogramme-level evaluation of

UNECE’s support to the advancement of Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies in member States (Working Party 6)” (December 2019)

The evaluation team found strong relevance in the work of the ECE Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization (WP.6) which is being carried out consistently with the agreed mandates that are highly relevant for a broad variety of member States and partners. WP.6 systematically achieves positive outcomes in all areas of intervention and adds value in respect of an impartial platform for engagement for member States.

Final progress report as of 31 December 2022

#	Recommendation	Management response	Responsibility	Target date/deadline	Date of implementation/comments
1	Update and reflect the work of Working Party 6 in line with the 2030 Agenda, which was adopted by ECE member States in 2015. Review and update the Terms of Reference of Working Party 6 in line with the Guidelines for the Establishment and Functioning of Working Parties within ECE (ECE/EX/1 paragraph 3(d) – see Annex) to assess and propose necessary adjustments to the mandate and status of Working Party 6 and submit to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards.	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The secretariat notes the need to update the Terms of Reference of WP. 6, which date back to 2003, in order to reflect the priorities of the 2030 Agenda, as appropriate. Recent activities by the WP.6 on “Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)” and on “Gender Responsive Standards” helped raise awareness on SDG-related issues among member States. The revision of the Terms of Reference will build upon current activities of WP.6 that have already been aligned with the 2030 Agenda as reflected in the Programme of Work of WP.6 for 2020. Approved by WP.6 at its 29th Annual Session in 2019 (ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2019/5), the Programme of Work was geared towards</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	Implemented as of December 2022	<p>The Virtual Informal Consultations of WP.6 that took place on 2 and 3 November 2020 (replacing the formal WP.6 session due to the restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic) endorsed the programme of work where the 2030 Agenda is fully reflected for the parts concerning regulatory cooperation and standardization policies. In view of the informal nature of the session, the 2020 session could not discuss the revision of the Terms of Reference which were not available in E, F and R and was not considered “business-critical decisions”. Consequently, the session assigned the review of the Terms to the Bureau that will complete the revision for the 2021 session.</p> <p>In August 2021, the topic was added to the Agenda of the 31st Session of WP.6 (agenda item 8d) scheduled on 24-26 November 2021, tasking the newly elected Bureau to draft a proposition for a Revised ToR at the 2022 Plenary. The 31st session also proposed an in-depth discussion on the topic of circular economy (closely related to SDG 12) which will allow the Working Party to consider how to integrate this theme into the ToR.</p> <p>At the 31st session of WP.6 (26 November 2021), decision 15 was</p>

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		<p>supporting members States' efforts for the delivery of the SDGs.</p> <p>The secretariat of WP.6 will work with the Bureau to draft an update of the Terms of Reference for discussion and – if consensus is found – for adoption at the WP.6 session scheduled for 2-3 November 2020. The updated Terms of Reference will be submitted for review by the Steering Committee for Trade Capacity and Standards at its 7th Session in 2021, for subsequent submission for approval by the EXCOM.</p>		<p>adopted, which stated that “the WP.6 Bureau shall follow up on this recommendation and present a revised ToR to the next annual session as appropriate.”</p> <p>At the 32nd session of WP.6 (9 November 2022), decision 13 on the revised terms of reference for WP.6 in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/11 was adopted.</p>	
2	<p>Take steps to formally establish START-Ed and the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative, in line with the agreed guidance and procedures in Annex F.</p>	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation</p> <p>The secretariat notes the recommendation to formally establish these groups of experts in line with agreed rules and procedures. These initiatives have so far operated informally, as foreseen by the WP.6 Terms of Reference which stipulate that, when necessary, ad hoc groups of experts can be established to address specific problems and concerns identified by the Working Party.</p> <p>The secretariat is currently facing budgetary and personnel constraints that may result in a need to streamline activities. Resources permitting, the secretariat will prepare Terms of</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	<p>Implemented as of December 2021</p> <p>The 2020 Virtual Informal Consultations approved the report of the START-Ed group and requested the group to prepare a programme of work for approval in 2021. In view of the resource constraints (including a recruitment freeze) and because of the informal session, WP.6 postponed the formal establishment of the START-Ed group till the 2021 session.</p> <p>As of August 2021, the GRSI was continuing under the XB funding and will deliver early in 2022; based on the final products, the Working Party will likely request this to become an official subgroup of WP.6. Concerning the START-Ed, the current work comes in support of a single recommendation (Recommendation I) and though vital it would require additional funding to justify an official subgroup.</p> <p>At the 31st session of WP.6 (26 November 2021), the topic was presented and it was agreed that the Bureau shall put together a ToR for a new Team of Specialists on GRS to be presented at the June 2022 SCTCS for endorsement (paragraph 29).</p>	

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		Reference for the START-Ed Group and for the Gender Responsive Standards Initiative and submit these through the Steering Committee to EXCOM for formal establishment, in 2021. Additional XB resources will need to be secured for supporting any additional activities in these Groups.			
3	<p>Find ways to address inclusion and participation in Working Party 6 groups of experts: Advisory Group on Market Surveillance (MARS), Group on Education and Standardisation (START-Ed), Group of Experts on Risk Management in Regulatory Systems (GRM), Standardisation and Regulatory Techniques (START).</p> <p>This could include:</p> <p>(i) increasing representation of women in all Working Party 6 advisory groups to increase input of women in the standards development process, to improve gender balance in these bodies, and to enhance expertise to create and deliver gender inclusivity;</p> <p>(ii) setting up a system of</p>	<p>UNECE partially accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>As foreseen by the ECE Gender Action Plan, the secretariat has mainstreamed gender in its decisions and activities e.g. by leading ground-breaking work on the inclusion of women in standards development processes, at national, regional and international levels (i.e. the Gender Responsive Standards Declaration).</p> <p>As additionally foreseen by the Programme level evaluation on gender mainstreaming, the secretariat monitors the level of participation of women in the meetings of the Working Party and its advisory groups. While the participation of female delegates in WP.6 activities remains below parity, it is higher than in the standards community more generally.</p> <p>The secretariat will strive to further increase women's participation by raising</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	Implemented as of December 2021	<p>This work is firmly anchored in the current continuous activities of the secretariat in support of WP.6.</p> <p>The secretariat searches continuously new approaches to supporting member States' efforts in the mentioned areas that allow increase the participation of women in WP.6 related work. The Gender-Responsive Standards initiative is bringing in positive reactions from UNECE member States and beyond.</p> <p>The secretariat is fully aware of the fact that the level or gender of delegates from member States is not in the hands of the secretariat and the ultimate decisions regarding the composition of national delegations is beyond the reach of the secretariat.</p> <p>The secretariat continues to identify and negotiate additional XB funding to support further efforts as an ongoing activity and part or the secretariats regular work. Negotiations have been held e.g. with the German Government and the Russian Voluntary Fund.</p> <p>As regards the experiences from external partners and other ECE bodies, the secretariat continues maintaining informal liaison with colleagues in the ECE, through the Gender Focal point, and with delegations participating in WP.6 related work in order to further identify and share best practice. The lessons learned include a need for active encouragement of national delegations to promote women's participation, e.g. through the promotion of the Gender-Responsive Standards Declaration. Several delegations have reported on the</p>

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	<p>regional hubs or rotating the timing of advisory group virtual meetings so that participants in time zones different to Europe may be more easily included.</p>	<p>the attention of member States to the importance of reaching parity in the numbers of male and female participants. However, the secretariat cannot guarantee a more balanced participation as the final decisions on members of delegations are not under the secretariat's control. The secretariat will also collect experiences of other ECE bodies and external partners aimed at improving the representation of women in their respective activities. The secretariat will draw lessons from these experiences for replication within WP.6 during the first half of 2020. The secretariat will prepare a presentation or a report for discussion at the WP.6 session 2-3 November 2020 on the experiences of other ECE bodies as well external partners that have successfully increased the participation of women and how these experiences could be replicated by the WP.6 itself.</p> <p>The timing of the meetings of WP.6 groups is currently set by consulting through "Doodle" polls. The secretariat will strive to rotate the timing of meetings of the groups, to the extent this is acceptable to participants.</p> <p>It will be difficult for the secretariat to support a system of regional hubs without XB funds. For the time being, the</p>			<p>results of their efforts in the meetings of the Gender-Responsive Standards Initiative that were further reported to the WP.6 session on 3 November 2020 (see paragraphs 24-26 of ECE/CTCS/WP6/2020/2).</p> <p>As of December 2021, the leadership of WP.6 is majority women (female chair, two female vice-chairs, one male vice-chair). One of the subgroups (MARS) is led by a woman; one is led by a man (GRM); the third is currently vacant. One initiative is led by a woman (GRSI); the other is led by a man (START-Ed). WP.6 therefore portrays a perfect parity in the leadership.</p> <p>The Declaration on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development is now signed by 80 organizations, each having committed to assign a gender-focal point to their standards development.</p> <p>XB funds are being used to complete the Standards for SDG / gender-responsive standards project (E330). A training will be organized in April-May 2022, a training package will be made available in English and in Russian for this. A closing event for this project will be organized late May/early June 2022. The German PTB is being approached for subsequent funds (linked to circular economy).</p> <p>The GRSI has been broken down into several project teams which meet regularly. These meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis on average and the meeting time has been rotating to accommodate Australian and US experts (late evening Geneva-time).</p>

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		secretariat will continue to work with other Regional Commissions and partners to respond to the needs of countries beyond the ECE region provided that XB funds can be made available. The secretariat will strive to mobilize further resources for this purpose.			
4	<p>Explore ways to address resource constraints, for example, by making full use of the resources assigned to Working Party 6, considering redistribution of resources within the Section, interns from Masters' programmes on standardization, and extra-budgetary projects with project funded project managers.</p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The secretariat is evaluating several possibilities to address resource constraints. The possibility to redistribute RB resources within the Section will be reviewed as part of the overall review of programmes in view of the envisaged review of the Division's support to activities. As regards internships, the secretariat has established contacts with several universities that offer courses and Undergraduate or Graduate programmes in standardization in view of welcoming students as interns. The secretariat will explore the possibility of establishing a scheme with interested universities, in line with general rules for UN internships.</p> <p>Given the restrictions on the number of interns per Division and further future restrictions in the ECE's swing space from late 2020 onwards, the secretariat will work with the ECE internship programme to explore new ways of internship programmes, such as remote work based</p>	Secretary of W.P.6		<p>Implemented as of December 2021</p> <p>In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the secretariat has worked most of 2020 remotely and the possibility of using external resources such as interns and relevant programmes has been significantly reduced. The XB personnel is fully in use in support of the programme of work of WP.6 and the secretariat will continue looking for additional XB resources and will also increase the use of interns and other similar resources.</p> <p>Each team, project and initiative reports annually to the WP.6 session on their outreach and work on attracting additional resources.</p> <p>The secretariat is negotiating an XB project on the role of standards for the development of the Circular Economy with the Government of Germany.</p> <p>As of August 2021, vacancies and recruitment freezes have made the redistribution of resources within the Section challenging. As part of a Division wide effort to ensure delivery of essential work streams, the Secretary of UN/CEFACT is envisaged to support WP.6 on a part-time basis. This should facilitate the smooth execution of the 31st session and the regular meetings of the subgroups. The subgroups are reporting to the 31st Session of the Working Party on their efforts to secure XB resources (both volunteer experts to progress the work and financial funding).</p> <p>As of 31 December 2021, this recommendation is implemented as much as possible with the resources available. The Secretary of UN/CEFACT (P4) has been reassigned on a temporary basis to WP.6</p>

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		<p>within the interns' respective universities with online supervision from ECE which could make better use of the secretariat's resources.</p> <p>The secretariat is currently implementing a project financed by the Government of Germany through the Physikalisch-Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) on "Enhancing usage and uptake of standards for sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, with special emphasis on gender equality" (December 2019 – December 2021). Additionally, the secretariat will continue its efforts for raising further XB funds including project funded staff.</p> <p>The secretariat will report at the next session of the WP. 6 in November 2020 on its continued efforts in securing additional XB resources for the programme of work.</p>		in order to ensure the smooth organization and functioning of the working party; this is expected to be prolonged in 2022 while a more permanent solution is being sought.	
5	<p>Seek partnerships with a broad range of women's organisations, including those representing vulnerable groups of women, in each thematic area and advisory group to seek their perspectives, address their needs, and to reach those furthest behind.</p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>The secretariat has been working with a number of NGOs representing the needs of women, including L'Association Réseau Normalisation et Francophonie (RNF), Women at the Table, the International Gender Champions, ISEAL Alliance "Gender Working Group", HERProject and others in order to seek their perspectives and address their needs.</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	Implemented as at December 2020	<p>This activity is fully anchored in the continuous activity of the secretariat in support of the Chair and Bureau of WP.6 and can thus be considered as completed.</p> <p>An increasing number of Member States beyond the ECE region and numerous international and national standardization bodies are supporting the initiative and bringing in their contribution towards the work. Information on work in 2020 can be found in the report to the annual session "Report on GRSI activities ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2020/4".</p>

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		<p>The secretariat will continue to work with the above-mentioned organizations and identify other partners and seek ways of addressing their needs and perspectives in WP.6 activities, and more broadly in forums related to standards and quality infrastructure as described in the WP.6 programme of work for 2020.</p>			
6	<p>In order to present the findings of the two most recent Working Party 6 initiatives, consider developing a publication on Gender Responsive Standards and the Sustainable Development Goals, focusing on SDG 5 as a standalone and cross cutting goal to showcase how standards contribute to achievement of gender equality, gender mainstreaming, and achievement of the SDGs in the UNECE region.</p>	<p>UNECE accepts the recommendation</p> <p>The secretariat is conscious of the need to present the findings of its initiatives to a broader audience. A publication on Gender Responsive Standards was issued in November 2019 and is accessible here. A publication on Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals (ECE/TRADE/444) was issued as early as in October 2018. Four follow-up publications focussing on how standards support the achievement of each of the SDGs that were covered by the XB project on “Standards for the SDGs” (namely SDG 6, 7, 11 and 13) will be issued in 2020.</p> <p>The secretariat will finalize the follow up publications on “Standards for the SDGs” in 2020, and subject to the availability of XB funds, publish and print it (or its summary) as a visually attractive and user-friendly document.</p>	Secretary of W.P.6	<p>Implemented as of December 2022</p> <p>In November 2019, the publication “Gender-Responsive Standards” (ECE/TRADE/445) was published. This was in progress at the time of the initial recommendations and directly corresponds to the recommendation 6 “consider developing a publication on Gender-Responsive Standards and Standards Development”. This document is still considered relevant.</p> <p>In addition, a survey was conducted on gender action plans and training related to gender inclusive standards development; the results of this were analysed and subsequently presented to the 2022 Annual Session (see ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/8). A training manual on gender-responsive standards and standards development was completed in Spring 2022x translated into Russian (under the project E330) and presented to the Annual Session (see ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/INF.2). A similar training manual was developed on standards for SDGs (see ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/INF.3). A gender inclusive methodology for creating gender action plans was finalized. This was presented to the 32nd session of WP.6 (9 November 2022), recorded in decisions 11 took note of the Guidelines on Developing Gender-Responsive Standards in document ECE/CTCS/WP.6/2022/9. The publication is finalized under symbol number ECE/TRADE/472.</p>	